

















ABRAHAM LINCOLN



THE  
BOYS IN BLUE  
OF  
1861-1865

A CONDENSED HISTORY WORTH  
PRESERVING



A. C. LEONARD, PUBLISHER  
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# DEDICATED

TO THE

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC, UNION VETERAN  
LEGION, NAVAL VETERANS, UNION EX-PRISONERS  
OF WAR ASSOCIATION, SONS OF VETERANS, SPANISH  
WAR VETERANS, UNITED AMERICAN MECHANICS, P.  
O. S. OF A., WOMEN'S RELIEF CORPS, LADIES OF  
THE G. A. R., LADIES' AID SOCIETY, DAUGHTERS OF  
VETERANS AND KINDRED PATRIOTIC ORGANIZA-  
TIONS, IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE THOUSANDS OF  
PATRIOTS WHO GAVE UP THEIR LIVES IN REBEL  
PRISONS, PREFERRING

“DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR.”





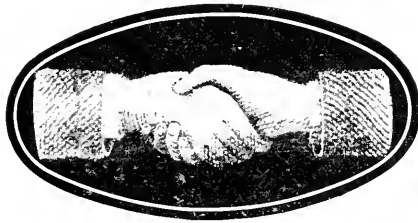
## LEST WE FORGET.

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THE BOYS IN BLUE" is published, not with a desire to keep alive the animosity engendered by the Civil War (perish the thought!), but with "malice to none," as an object lesson in patriotism and reminder of what thousands of the rank and file of the great Army of the Republic endured, in order that the present and future generations might continue to enjoy the blessing of

ONE COUNTRY AND ONE FLAG.





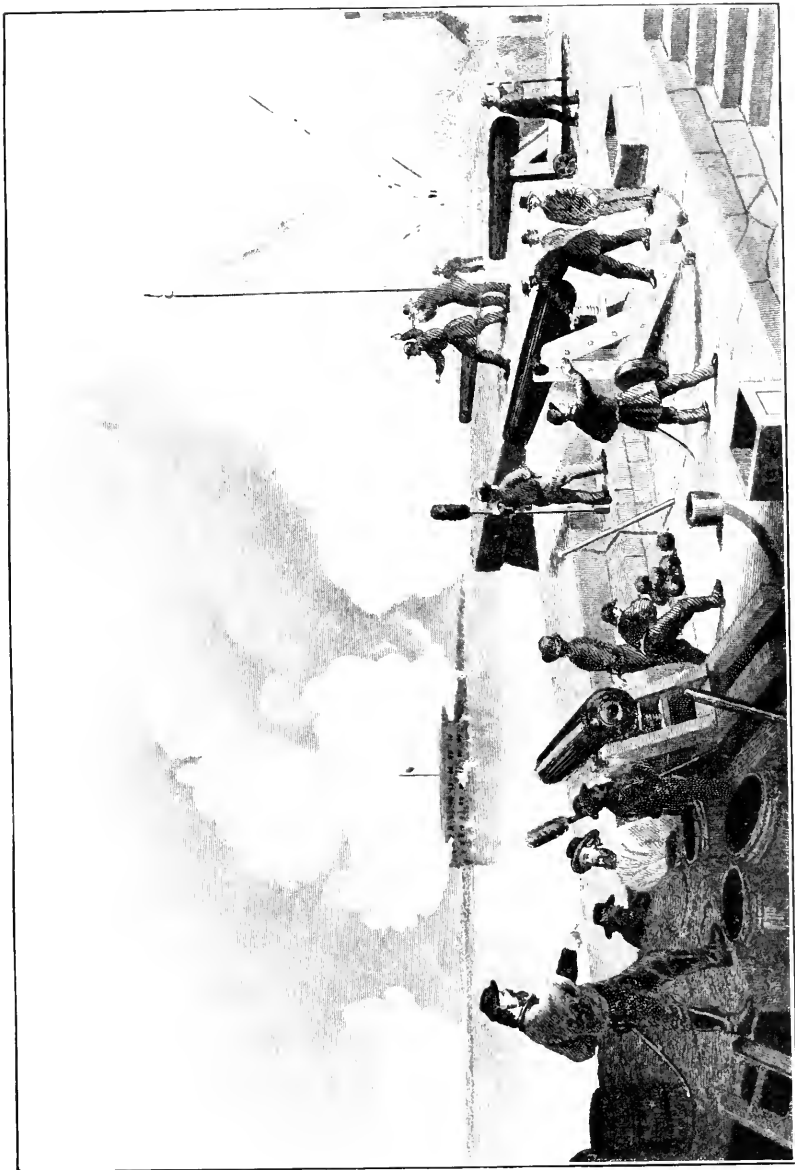
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FIRING ON FORT SUMTER



## WAR'S ALARM.



APRIL 12th, 1861, the whole country was startled by the news that the Secessionists, aiming at the life of the Government, had fired on Fort Sumter.

The alarm was quickly sounded, and in response to President Lincoln's call for 75,000 flag defenders, issued April 15th, recruiting stations were opened, military camps established, and the music of fife and drum was heard throughout the loyal states.

Men of every business, profession and calling cast aside the pursuits and pleasures of life, and thronged to the field, determined that the Union should not be dissolved and our starry banner trailed in the dust.

The conflict assuming greater proportions than was at first supposed, it became necessary for Mr. Lincoln to issue other calls for troops, as follows: May 3d, 1861, 500,000; July 2d, 1862, 300,000; August 4th, 1862, 300,000; October 17th, 1863, 300,000; February 1st, 1864, 200,000; March 14th, 1864, 200,000; July 18th, 1864, 500,000; December 19th, 1864, 300,000; 186,000 colored troops being included in the above calls, in addition to which State Militia to the number of 15,000 were called out for short periods, to meet critical emergencies, making the whole number of

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men called to arms, two million six hundred and ninety thousand.

“Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs but to do and to die.”

Not that these self-sacrificing men loved war more than peace, but because their country's welfare was above every other consideration.

“Theirs was a patriotism that was heroic,  
A heroism that was patriotic.”

In proof of which the official records show that 65,000 of the number were killed in battle, 40,000 were mortally wounded, 190,000 died of disease contracted in the line of duty, 60,000 perished in rebel prisons or soon after being released therefrom, while 250,000 more were disabled for life. So that it may truthfully be said, that every star and stripe on our Nation's banner has been bathed in the loyal blood of the men who bared their breasts to the shot and shell of those who would supplant it with another.

Then too, during the forty years that have come and gone since peace was declared, the unerring sharp-shooter death has kept up a continual firing on the surviving sons of the Union, picking off thousands upon thousands of the rank and file each twelve months, the Commissioner of Pensions estimate for 1904 being 60,000 and in the same time almost every

## THE BOYS IN BLUE

one of the more prominent leaders in that great struggle for national existence, have passed away.

The immortal Lincoln, who on the 1st day of January, 1863, with a single stroke of his pen, abolished the human auction block and the slave driver's lash.

Grant, who would "fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer."

Hancock, "the superb."

"Black Jack" Logan.

Franz Sigel, whom the German soldiers fairly idolized.

Meade and Reynolds of Gettysburg fame.

"Pap" Thomas, "the rock of Chickamauga."

Sherman, who "marched to the sea," and on December 21st, 1864, telegraphed President Lincoln offering as a Christmas gift "the City of Savannah and its contents."

"Fighting Joe" Hooker.

"Little Mack."

Farragut, who notwithstanding the great danger of so exposed a position, lashed himself to the mast of his vessel at Mobile Bay, that he might the better direct the movements of his fleet.

Ben Butler, who earned for himself the eternal enmity of Southern sympathizers, by compelling them to march under and salute the Stars and Stripes.

"Dashing Phil" Sheridan, who inspired his retreat-

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

ing men to renewed action and victory, by his magical command,

“Face the other way boys,  
Face the other way,”

and who when asked where his headquarters were replied :

“Always in the saddle, Sir,  
Always in the saddle.”

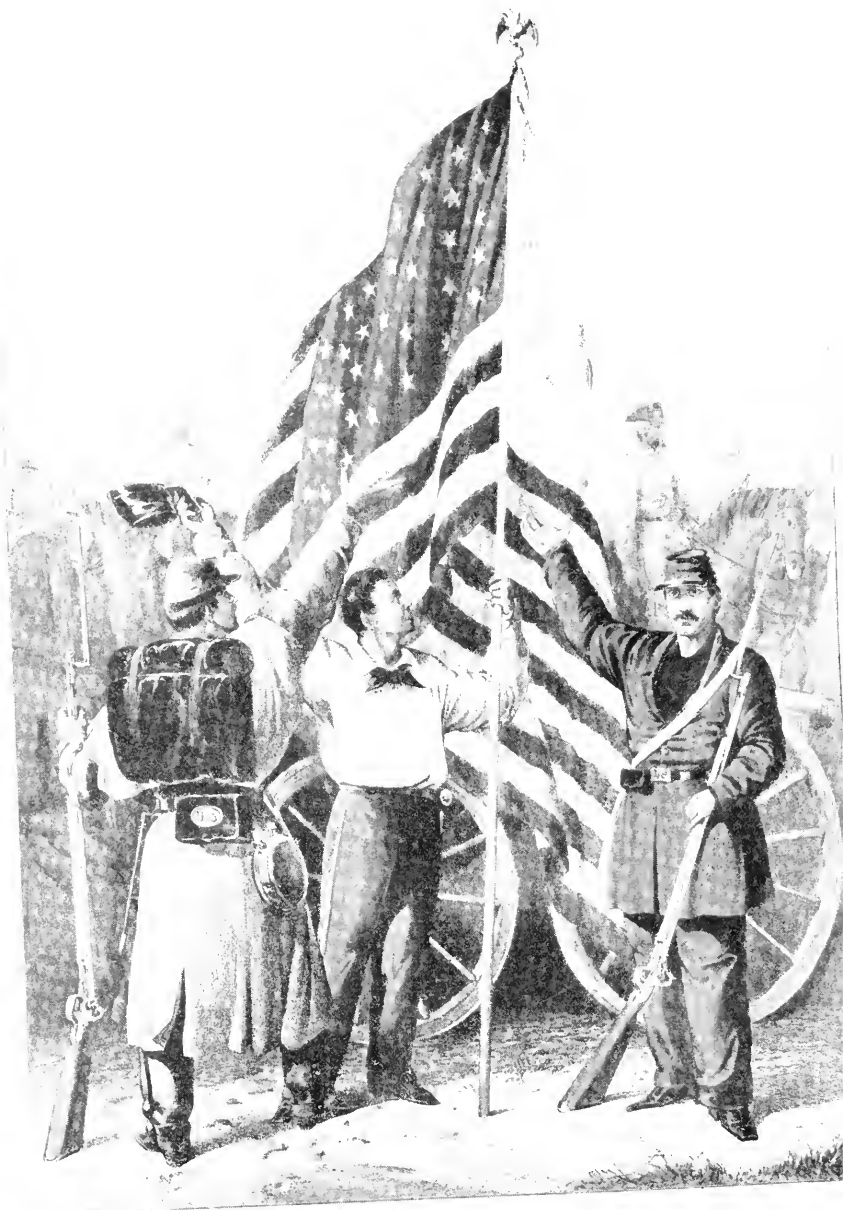
Mulligan, who when being carried mortally wounded from the field of battle, said “Men, lay me down and save the flag.”

Governor Dix of New York, whose famous order, “If any man attempts to tear down the flag of the Union, shoot him on the spot,” caused his name to be written on the scroll of undying fame.

These and a host of others have answered the final summons of the Great Commander of the Universe.

“Peace to their ashes.”





RALLYING AROUND THE FLAG



## ON TO WASHINGTON.

**T**HE Regiment, in which the writer enlisted in 1861, at the age of 16 years, was ordered to Washington, D. C., February 27th, 1862, thence to Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and attached to the 3d Brigade, 2d Division, 8th Corps, Department of West Virginia, being stationed by companies along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad for a distance of sixty miles, in order to prevent the guerrillas under Gilmore, White and Imboden from committing depredations upon the only line of railroad over which it was possible for the eastern army to obtain supplies or reinforcements.

In September of the same year the enemy having defeated McClellan on the Peninsula, and Pope at Bull Run, advanced into Maryland, and all the other Union forces having been withdrawn into Pennsylvania, the Regiment was for several days the only government troops south of "Mason and Dixon's line," and notwithstanding the fact that we were surrounded by the enemy, we held our position until re-inforcements arrived when the "rebs" were driven back.

Again, in June, 1863, General Kelley commanding the Department removed all of his men across the Potomac into Maryland with the exception of our

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

Regiment, which as before was left on the Virginia side as a check to the enemy's advance. We also served under Generals Sigel, Hunter and Crook, as well as with Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley, then under Grant in the Army of the James till the surrender of Lee at Appomattox Court House.

## A CONTRAST.

**I**N this narrative of rebel prison life it is not the intention to follow the beaten path by telling about the oft written and much talked of "Libby," where for the most part commissioned officers were incarcerated, and which was no doubt a miserable enough place of habitation, but we purpose informing our readers concerning the thousand fold more horrible slaughter pens, Belle Isle and Andersonville, where private soldiers and non-commissioned officers were confined, the difference between prison houses and prison pens being that the first named afforded at least a board floor to lie upon, and a roof and four walls as a protection from the inclement weather, while the latter consisted of mother earth for a bed and the broad canopy of heaven for a covering.

The Hon. James G. Blaine evidently knew of this distinction when he declared, in a public address, that

"The history of the world can show no greater heroism,  
nor truer patriotism,  
Than that displayed by the inmates of  
Southern prison pens."

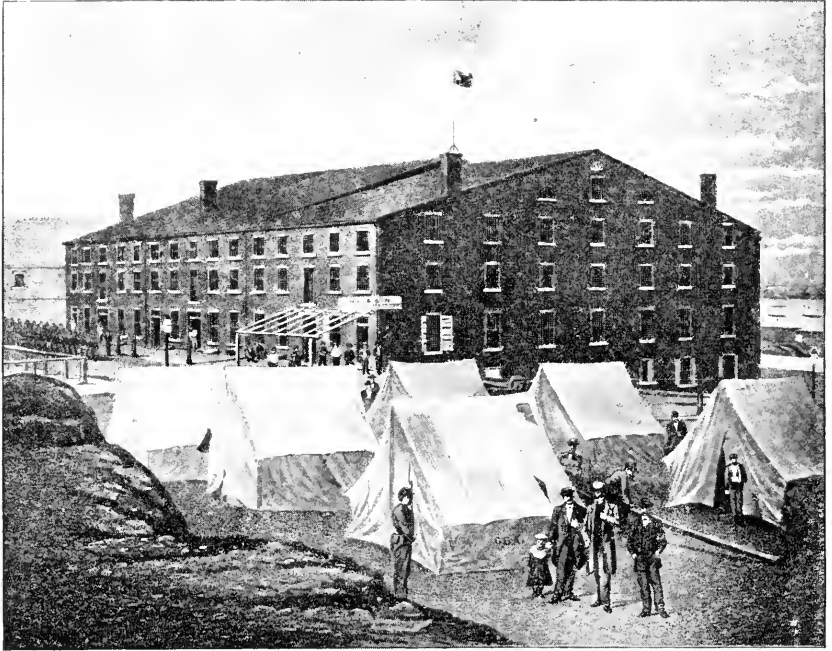
There is a maxim of old that "it's sweet to die for

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one's country," but who would not rather be shot to death on the field of battle, in sight of the dear old flag, than to die by the slow process of starvation, surrounded by misery indescribable?

"The bright side of life in Libby Prison" is the title of a lecture that has been delivered throughout the country, by a gentleman who was there, but while I am aware of the fact that there is a trite saying, "Blessed is the man who makes one to smile," I cannot lay claim to that benediction in connection with this recital of the blackest page in the history of the Civil War, for nothing ever occurred within the stockades of Belle Isle and Andersonville that could cause even the faintest evidence of pleasure. Sorrow and only sorrow abounding on every hand, the half of which can never be told.





LIBBY PRISON

## GILMORE'S GUERRILLAS.



THE morning of Tuesday, February 2d, 1864, found our company of 60 men encamped on the south bank of the Potomac River, at Patterson Creek, West Virginia, 65 miles distant from Harper's Ferry.

The single picket had just been posted on the public road when he saw in the distance a body of horsemen dressed in the uniform of Union Soldiers, and it having been generally known that Averell's Command of Union Cavalry was in the immediate neighborhood, the sentry naturally supposed these to be the advance guard of that organization and permitted them to approach, which they did in a very leisurely manner, until within hailing distance, when just as the unsuspecting picket was in the act of bringing his musket to a "charge" with the challenge "who comes there" a dozen revolvers were quickly drawn and leveled at his head with the command, in language more forceable than polite, "lay down that gun or die," and it is needless to say that he did the only thing possible under the circumstances, though even then he thought he was being made the victim of a practical joke, but soon discovered that men are not always what they appear to be, for those sneaking

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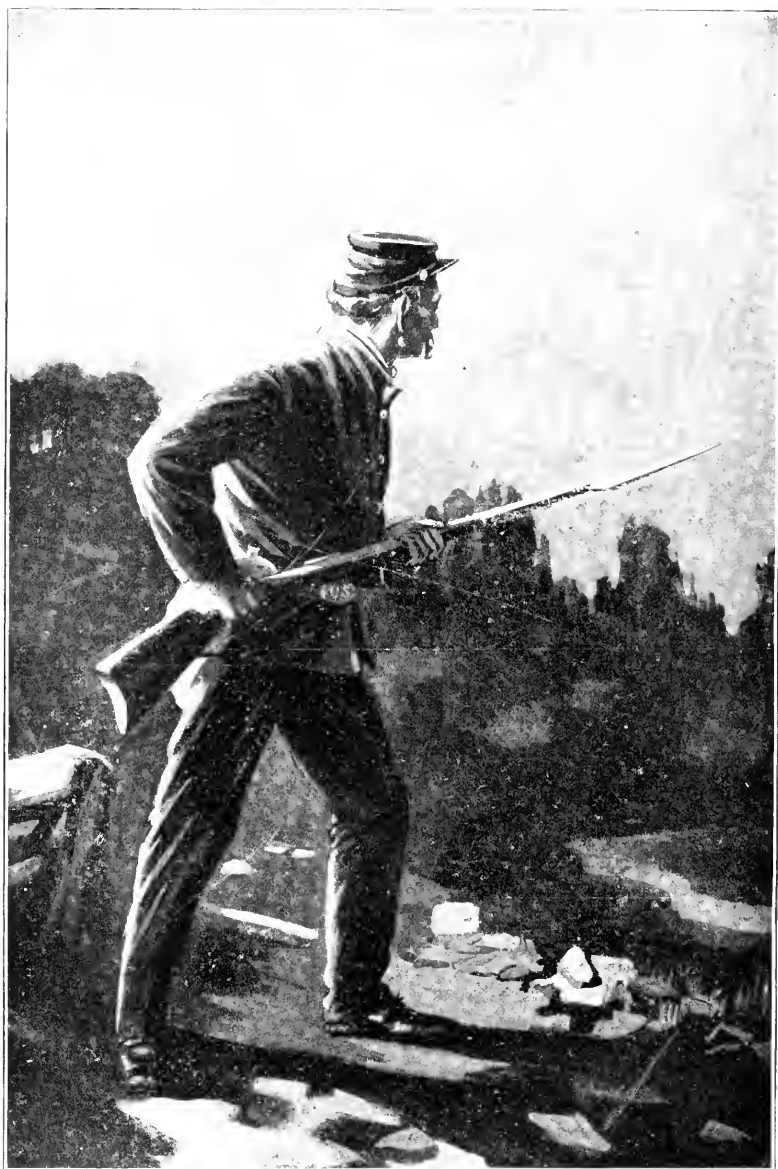
cowards who had not the courage to fight on an open field of battle, nor even approach a picket post in their true colors, turned out to be a portion of the notorious Harry Gilmore's band of guerillas, and in a few minutes the main body, some 600 strong, came in sight, when with drawn sabers the entire force dashed down on the camp, where all unconscious of danger the men were partaking of their usual breakfast, and after a short but desperate struggle, the captain realizing that further resistance against such odds only meant the annihilation of his entire command, surrendered to Gilmore, who at once cut the telegraph wires, set fire to the railroad bridge and our company quarters, rifled each man's pockets and started us off in the direction of Staunton. We had not gone far however, when our aged company cook becoming exhausted and unable to continue the forced march, was shot dead and his body left by the roadside.

### **SPITZFADDEN**

for that was the cook's outlandish name, was an odd character generally speaking, and never should have enlisted, but having done so it soon became evident that for carrying a gun he was a complete failure, and he would long since have been discharged and sent home, but for the fact that his plea of extreme poverty prevailed with the captain, and being in need of a







HALT, WHO COMES THERE?

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

company cook he was given that position, which it must be said to his credit he filled in a very satisfactory manner, with the exception that he was extremely untidy in appearance, which was all the more pronounced owing to the fact that he persistently refused to draw his allotments of clothing, preferring to get along as best he could in order that he might have a snug sum of cash to his credit at the expiration of his term of service, the rule of the government being to pay cash in lieu of undrawn annual allowances, his very plausible excuse being that he would only ruin new clothes at his work, which was very true, as he was in no wise careful not to soil his garments, for had he occasion to lift a black pan or kettle from the fire his always handy cap was used for the purpose, likewise when his hands became soiled from handling the indispensable "salt horse," or pork, there was nothing more natural than for "Spitz" to wipe them on his cap, blouse or pants, so that as may be supposed, after a year's service he was a veritable man of soot and grease, and we frequently told him that if he did not clean up and get another uniform we would get another cook, but he well knew that this was impossible, as no other member of the company would accept the place, so we had to tolerate him, and matters went on in this fashion until one morning as we gathered about the campfire for our usual allowance of coffee and hardtack, what was our surprise to see the

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

old cook minus his cap and in a great rage, declaring that some one had stolen his headgear, and in spite of our suggestion that this would be impossible, owing to the fact that he never took it off his head unless to use as a pot lifter, he refused to be comforted, and though we promised to buy him a new cap if he would give us our coffee, he would not be bribed, and in spite of all we could say persistently refused to hand out our breakfast until his own cap was returned to him: consequently the pot continued to boil while a half hundred hungry men expostulated in vain, for it must be remembered that the cook had almost supreme control over the mess kettles, until finally goaded to desperation by our long fast and the alluring odor of the "soldier's beverage," patience ceased to be a virtue and the boys with one accord took matters into their own hands and helped themselves, while Spitz went off to report his grievance to the Captain. But imagine, if you can, our discomfort when as the last tin of coffee was drunk with a relish, our eyes beheld in the bottom of the kettle, all boiled to pieces, the remnants of the cook's miserable old cap, it having no doubt dropped from his shaggy, unkempt head unnoticed during the darkness of the early morning.

## AVERELL IN PURSUIT.



AFTER proceeding on our unwilling tramp for several miles, Gilmore received word through his scouts that Gen. Averell was in pursuit with a view to our recapture, whereupon the guerrilla leader ordered his men to trot their horses, and "cut down the first prisoner who fails to keep up," it being very evident that the aim of our captor was to reach the not far distant Blue Ridge Mountain before Averell could overtake him, well knowing that he could then bid defiance to superior numbers, and with that object in view we were driven along over rough roads, hills, and through streams of water, until footsore, and more dead than alive, we arrived at the base of the mountain, then up its rugged side we were hurried until the summit had almost been reached, when firing was heard in the rear, and casting our eyes back there was Averell pitching into the Johnny rebs' rear guard, at the sight of which, notwithstanding our feeble condition, we longed to give vent to our feelings in three cheers for Averell, in fact we felt like crying out in the language of the poet :

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

“ Our flag is there, our flag is there,  
Let’s greet it with three loud huzzas,  
Our flag is there, our flag is there,  
Behold the glorious stripes and stars.”

But we did not do so for the very good reason that “ our friends the enemy,” anticipating our inclination, informed us in most emphatic language that if we wanted to “ hand in our checks ” all we had to do was make an outcry, and having no desire to die just then, with friends and flag so near as to give hope of speedy release from captivity, we sealed our lips and held our peace.

It was not long however until Averell, seeing that on account of the advantageous position of the enemy, no assistance could be rendered us, withdrew and retraced his steps. Gilmore at the same time turning to us tauntingly said, “ Yanks, your folks are leaving; better take a last look at them.”

There proved to be far more “ truth than poetry ” in those heartless words, for only seven of the Company of sixty men returned to those who were near and dear to them.

With the departure of Averell we determined to “ Stare fate in the face,” and make the best of the situation, and a body of “ home guards ” that had been sent out from Staunton to meet us, arriving on the scene the guerrilla chief turned his prisoners over

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

to them, while he went in quest of other prey, and we reached Staunton that evening, where a small room in a vacant house served as a place of confinement for the night, and the next morning we were hustled off to Richmond, where a motley crowd of citizens had assembled at the Station, and we were plied with all manner of questions concerning the war and its probable outcome, our answers of course being of the most flowery sort.

After a short stay in the Capitol City we were sent into exile on that most cruel place of incarceration of modern times, Belle Isle.

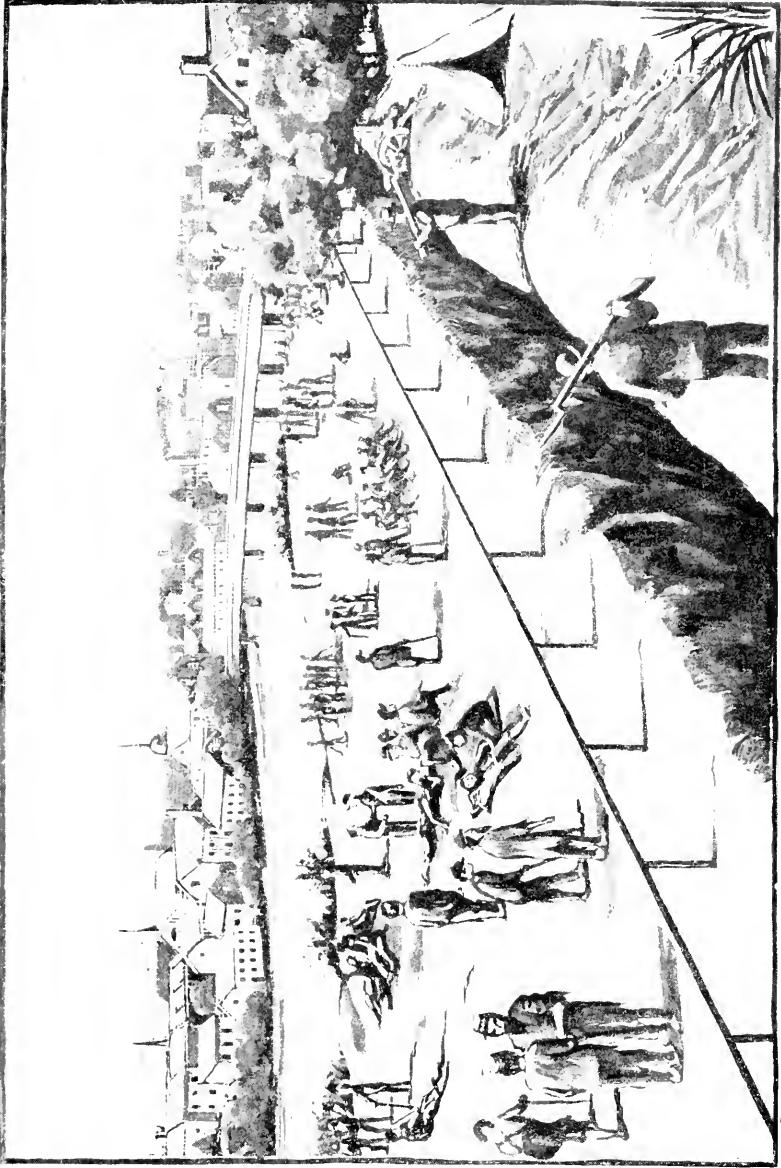
## BELLE ISLE



THIS island was situated in the James River close to Richmond, where thousands of human beings were confined during the slow passing days and nights of January, February and March, without shelter of any description, very little food and that the meanest imaginable, no fuel and not even water to drink except that obtained from the river where the cess-pools emptied into the same.

Then too as though there was not misery enough, the Island was infested by a gang of villains who were a perfect terror to the place, scoundrels from the slums of New York and Baltimore, who having enlisted for the bounty, availed themselves of the first opportunity to desert to the enemy's lines and be taken prisoners, then banded themselves together for the purpose of robbing their unfortunate fellow prisoners of whatever articles of value they might be possessed, and a more despicable lot of worse than highwaymen never drew the breath of life, their plunder consisting of shoes and clothing stripped from the sick and dying, trinkets from the pockets of the dead, and in fact anything they could lay their hands on, the booty thus obtained being disposed of to the guards.





BELLE ISLE PRISON



## THE BOYS IN BLUE

After a stay of several weeks on this "Isle of Misery," we were made glad by the announcement that we were to be transferred to another place of confinement that had been prepared for us in the State of Georgia, from the description of which we were led to believe it to be a very Paradise in comparison with our present place of residence. So that when the word came to take our departure for this "Garden of Eden," it was with as light hearts as could be under the circumstances, that we left the island and wended our way to the depot of the Georgia Central Railway, where sheep fashion we were loaded into cattle cars and started on our journey.

As we passed through the streets of Richmond, an old Irish woman stood in the doorway of her little home, waving her handkerchief and calling out, "Good bye boys, good bye, and may God take care of you down there in Georgia."

It has been said that "Kind words never die," and it's a fact, for we have never forgotten those words of cheer and sympathy.

After a most tiresome ride of three days and nights, stopping on the way at Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina, we reached our destination, Andersonville.

## ANDERSONVILLE

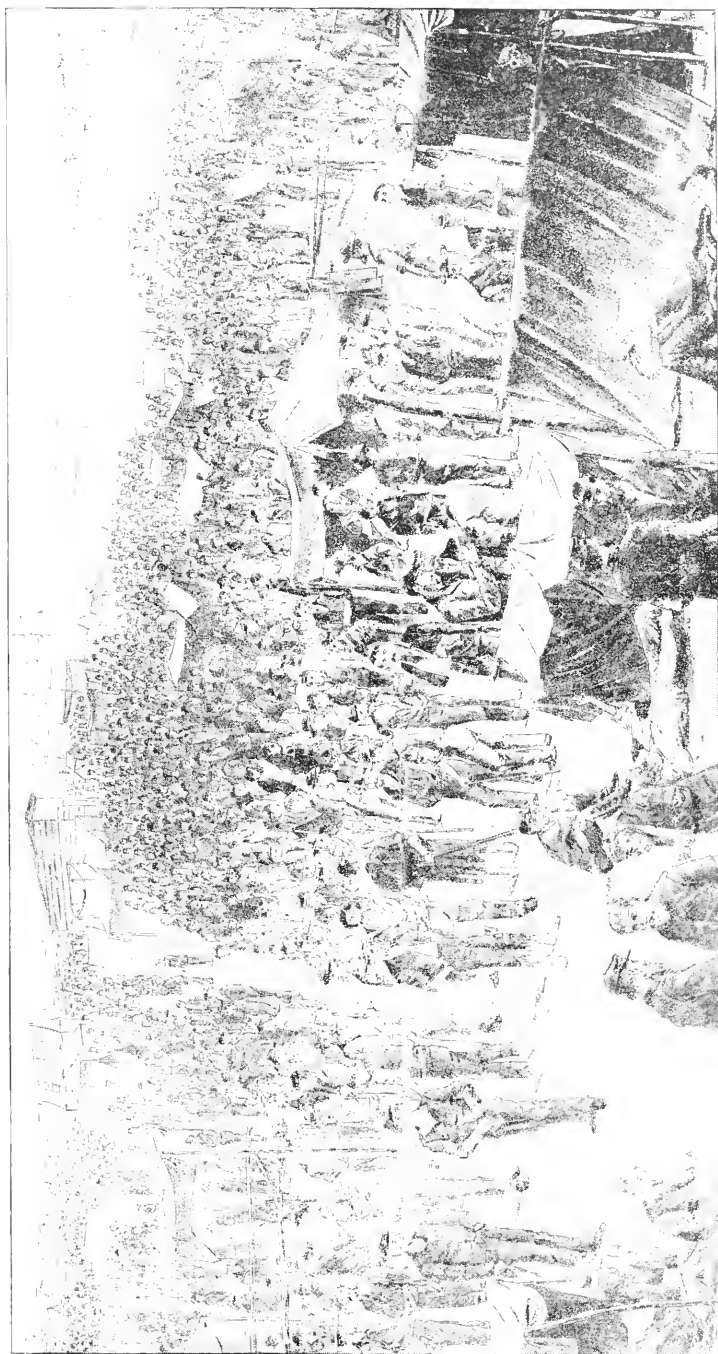


WE reached this place on the 25th day of February, being among the first prisoners to enter what turned out to be the worst place of human habitation, next to Belle Isle, the sun ever shone upon, being nothing more than a twenty-acre plot of ground enclosed by an eighteen-foot-high stockade, a narrow sluggish stream of water running through the place, and not only had no shelter been provided but every tree and bush that might have afforded a degree of protection from the burning southern sun had been removed.

This then was the "haven of rest" that had been so glowingly portrayed to us.

Over the gateway of this "Death Trap" might very appropriately have been placed the inscription, "All hope abandon he who enters here," and no doubt the thought uppermost in the mind of every inmate was, "Who, oh who, shall deliver us!"

The daily allowance of food in this "Lazar house," consisted of a small quantity of corn-bread, a bit of salt pork and a few worm-eaten dried peas, together with all the filthy water from the before-mentioned stream we cared to drink.



ANDERSONVILLE PRISON PEN



## THE BOYS IN BLUE

From the best scientific and practical sources it has been ascertained that the amount of solid food necessary to properly sustain human life is forty-two ounces, while the average allowance at Andersonville as at Belle Isle was but ten ounces.

On the other hand it is an established fact that the Confederate prisoners of war in Northern prisons



SHOT AT THE DEAD LINE

fared extremely well in all respects, as the following extract from a diary kept by a Southern woman, Miss Rowland, of Richmond, Va., goes to prove :

“ A large number of Confederate ex-prisoners of war arrived in Richmond to-day. All were well dressed, many having white shirts and collars and polished boots, and

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

they had as much baggage as they could carry. Some having as many as three blankets. All the men appeared well and hearty."

### **CAPTAIN HENRI WERTZ**

the inhuman scoundrel who was hanged at Washington, D. C., at the close of the war for cruel treatment of prisoners, was in command at Andersonville, and page upon page could be written of his fiendishness. One instance however will suffice to show the heartlessness of the man, it being that of a half-famished inmate who having lost a leg in battle, was under the necessity of making his way about the enclosure on crutches, seeing a small piece of corn bread lying on the ground inside the dead line, where no doubt it had been thrown by the guard from his perch on top of the stockade, endeavored to reach it with his crutch, but the ball from the cruel sentinel's rifle struck the starving cripple before he could obtain the coveted morsel, and he fell mortally wounded, seeing which a companion and myself hastened to render him assistance, but the same assassin having quickly re-loaded his piece, raised it to his shoulder and declared that he would shoot the first man who came near the dead line. Consequently our comrade writhing in agony died before the arrival of Wertz, who having heard the report of the gun mounted the stockade, and in a loud tone of voice, exclaimed: "That was right,



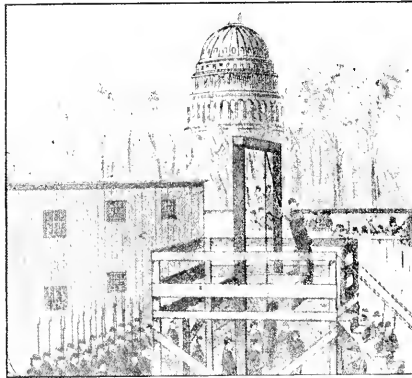
## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

guard, that was right, and treat every man the same way who approaches the dead line." This contrivance consisted of slender stakes driven into the ground, sixteen feet from and all around the inside of the stockade, with four-inch-wide pine strips nailed on top of the same, and very many of the three thousand guards, a majority of whom were too young to go to the front, were only too willing to obey the shooting orders of their commanding officer, the official account of whose trial and execution on file at Washington contains the following evidence :

“ The said Henri Wertz did combine with others in violation of the laws of war, to impair and injure the health, and to destroy the lives of prisoners of war, by subjecting to torture and suffering, by confining in unhealthy quarters, by exposing to the inclemency of winter and to the burning sun of summer, by compelling the use of impure water, and by furnishing insufficient and unwholesome food to 30,000 Federal prisoners held at Andersonville, Georgia, to the end that the armies of the United States might be weakened and impaired. The said Wertz, an officer in the military service of the so-called Confederate States, fully clothed with authority, did neglect to furnish tents, barracks or other shelter, and did cause to be taken from said prisoners of war their clothing, blankets and other property of which they were possessed at the time of being placed in his custody, and did refuse to furnish wood for cooking purposes, and to keep said prisoners warm in

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

winter, and did compel the said prisoners to use unwholesome water, reeking with the filth and garbage of the prison and prison guards, and the offal and drainage of the cook-house, whereby the prisoners became greatly reduced in bodily strength and many of them sickened and died by reason thereof, and that said Wertz did neglect to provide proper lodgings, food or nourishment, medicine and medical attendance for the sick, and the said Wertz disregarding the usages of civilized warfare, did subject the prisoners



HANGING OF WERTZ

to cruel and infamous punishment upon the slightest pretenses, by fastening large balls of iron to their feet, and binding numbers of the prisoners close together with chains around their wrists and ankles, and being so confined were subjected to the burning rays of the sun for days, from which cruel treatment numbers fainted and died. And said Wertz did further cruelly treat said prisoners by confining them within an instrument of torture called the

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

stocks, and still pursuing his evil purpose, did keep and use bloodhounds to hunt down prisoners who made their escape, whereof a number of fugitive prisoners of war were cruelly and inhumanly injured, in so much that many died. And by direction of said Wertz poisonous vaccine matter was deposited in the arms of many prisoners, by reason of which large numbers of them lost their arms, and many died. All of which the said Wertz maliciously intended with a view to assist in impairing the armies of the United States, and aid the then existing rebellion, in violation of the laws and customs of war."

This was certainly a strong indictment, and yet not more so than the facts warranted.

To cap the climax of this barbarous state of affairs, the old Belle Isle

### **GANG OF THIEVES**

having been transferred to Andersonville, were plying their infernal calling here as formerly on the island, and the cry of murder could be heard at all hours of the day and night.

But it's "a long lane that has no turn," and the turning point in this state of affairs was in sight when the gates were thrown open and 500 men of the 16th Connecticut Volunteers, who had just been taken prisoners at Plymouth, North Carolina, were ushered into the Stockade.

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

These "fresh fish" having surrendered on condition that their personal belongings be not taken from them, were not only well dressed, but having recently had a pay day were the possessors of greenbacks, watches and other articles of value, making them the especial prey of the "raiders," which the new arrivals soon discovered to their sorrow, and taking in the situation, determined that self-protection demanded the extermination of these highwaymen, and acting upon this decision, one of the Connecticut men assumed the leadership and lost no time in forming a Vigilance Committee from the pick of his companions, each member being armed with a stout club procured by permission of Captain Wertz, who seeing prospects of an execution taking place, agreed to render whatever assistance might be necessary in order to bring about that result.

The long-term prisoners to whom the thieves were well known, accompanied the Committee about the grounds pointing out the guilty as they came upon them, and with very little ceremony all such were taken in charge and placed in the guard house located outside the prison enclosure, twenty-six being the number thus arrested, whereupon a judge and jury were selected, and after a trial lasting several days, six of the number were found guilty of murder and sentenced to be hanged, ten days being given them in which to prepare for the sad event, at the





TUNNELING OUT

## THE BOYS IN BLUE

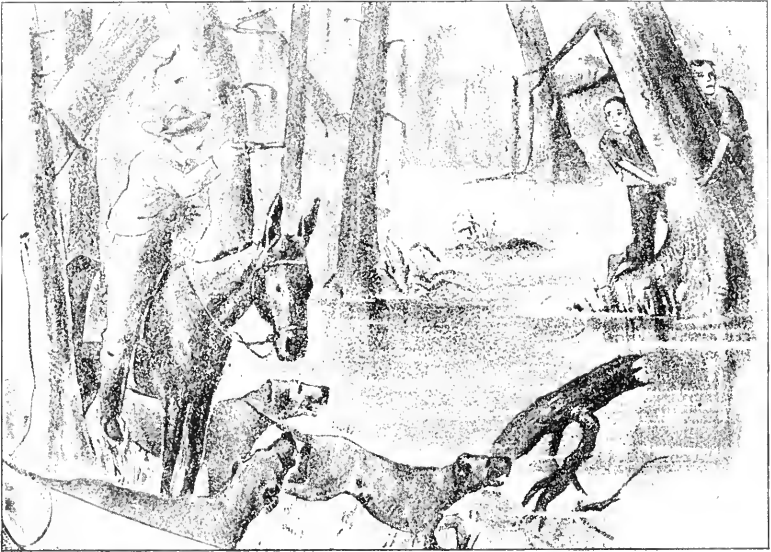
expiration of which time a scaffold was erected on an elevation within the Stockade, close to the north gate, in full view of the entire body of prisoners, thus serving as a terrible warning to other miscreants, and everything being in readiness the gate was thrown open and Wertz, seated on his favorite gray mare, rode in, followed by a squad of his men having in custody the condemned six, who were at once handed over to the Vigilants. Wertz then turning to his guards commanded, "about face, forward march," and returned to the outside, after which he with others mounted the Stockade, and from the sentry boxes witnessed the further proceedings.

During all this time the six men most concerned, with one exception, looked upon the whole affair as nothing more than an attempt to scare them, appearing to entertain the idea that all these preparations meant nothing serious, and in various ways they endeavored to show that they were not to be thus frightened.

One of the number however fully realized his predicament, and at an opportune moment broke away from his companions and ran toward the further side of the grounds, but the swamp hindered his progress, to say nothing of the stockade that confronted him on every side, rendering escape altogether out of the question, so that he was speedily secured, and along with his fellow thugs paid the penalty of his

## THE BOYS IN BLUE

atrocious crimes, and Andersonville was freed of six as contemptible scoundrels as ever drew the breath of



HUNTING ESCAPED PRISONERS

life, the cry of murder being no more heard within the enclosure.

On several occasions the

### SMALL-POX

made its appearance, and numbers of the prisoners fell victims to that terrible disease, while hundreds more were maimed for life through being inoculated with impure virus, by the so-called Confederate doctors who were mere students.



## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

Typhoid fever, dysentery, pneumonia, gangrene and scurvy constantly prevailed to an alarming extent.

In the month of May a well-organized plan to overpower the guards and escape was discovered by the authorities and prevented, which no doubt was just as well, for in all probability nothing would have been gained by the attempt, for though after weeks of tunnelling, the implements used being the half of a canteen and a spoon or a knife, a prisoner or two would succeed in reaching the outside world, they were invariably recaptured with the aid of bloodhounds, a number of which were kept for the purpose of hunting down escaped prisoners.

Rain fell for twenty-one consecutive days during the month of June, and yet this seeming cruelty on the part of the elements may have been a blessing in disguise, for whether as a result of the downpour or not, the fact remains that a very godsend in the form of a bubbling spring of clear water made its appearance at this time, and

### **PROVIDENCE SPRING**

as it was christened, continues flowing to this day.

From the evening of July 3d till the morning of the 5th, all the inmates were deprived of their usual allowance of food, the reason as given being that some one had stolen a sack of cornmeal from the rations wagon.

## THE BOYS IN BLUE

Thirty thousand already half starved men thus punished for the alleged wrong doing of one of their number, and that too on the Fourth of July. It might naturally be supposed that under such a doubly depressing condition of affairs, there would be no inclination on the part of the inmates to give expression to their patriotic feelings on that Glorious Independence Day, but not so, for this two-fold act of cruelty



DISCOVERY OF PROVIDENCE SPRING

only served to spur them on, and throughout the camp groups of men assembled and raised their weak voices in patriotic song, and it was quite refreshing to listen to the strains, though feeble, of "My Country 'Tis of Thee," "The Star Spangled Banner," and "Hail Columbia Happy Land," in that "Charnel house," while at the same time the inmates indig-

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

nantly rejected an offer made by an agent of the Confederacy, who put in an appearance just then with a proposition to parole all who would agree to work in the shoe and other factories throughout the South, the emissary no doubt thinking this day of especial fasting an opportune time to secure Yankee help, and we at once came to the conclusion that the withholding of our food was part of a diabolical plot to starve us into accepting their offer, but if so they had "reckoned without their host."

It so happened that fresh beef was being furnished just at that time instead of the customary salt pork, and the allowance intended for consumption on the 3d of the hot month of July, having been held over until the 5th was as may be supposed, literally alive with vermin when finally served, but famishing men dare not allow such trifles to stand in the way of satisfying their hunger, and it was devoured with a relish.

In August the number of prisoners had increased to 31,000 and the deaths during that month were 3,000, overtaxing the grave-diggers to such an extent that many bodies remained unburied for, to say the least, too great a length of time.

Careful estimates show that the average duration of life at Andersonville was 95 days, the whole number of deaths in this second "Black Hole of Calcutta" according to the official records of the keeper being 14,000.

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

No wonder that official boasted that he was "doing more in the rear for the Confederacy than General Lee was doing at the front."

Dr. Chapin, the government surgeon in charge of West's Hospital at Baltimore, where many returned Union prisoners were treated, writing to the Chairman of the United States Senate Investigating Committee, regarding the condition of those who came under his notice, said :

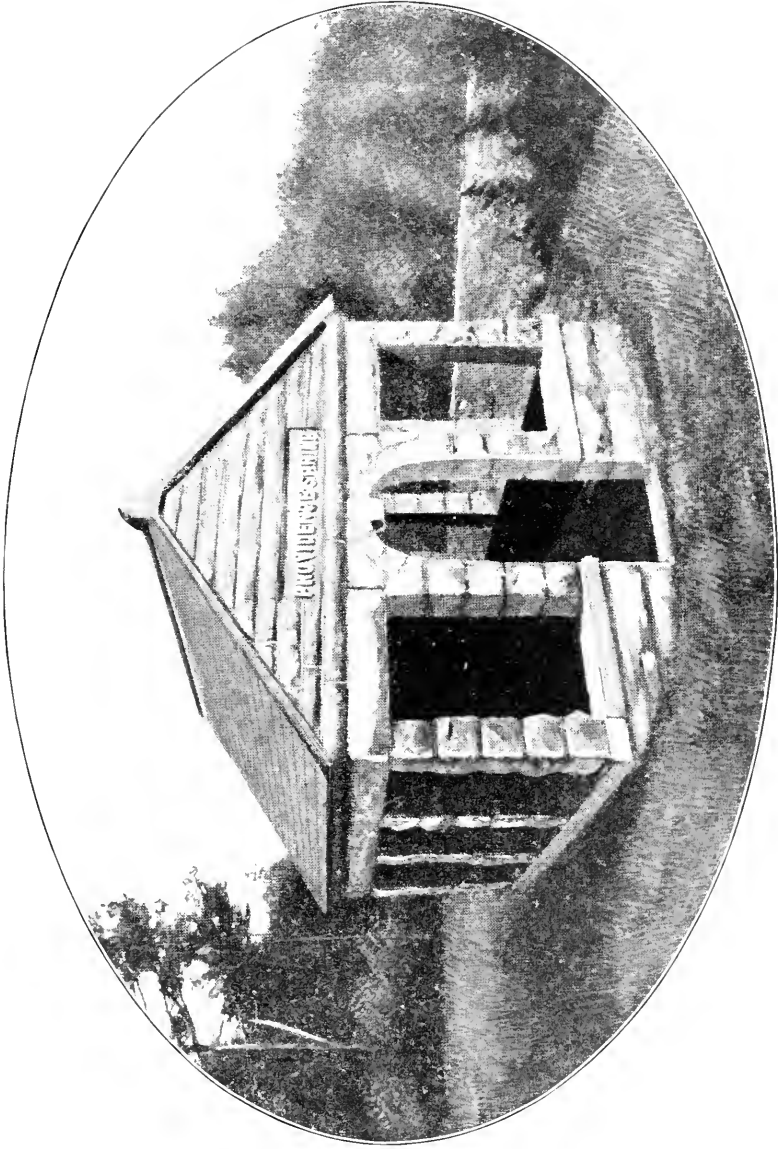
"Not one in ten is able to stand alone, and many are so emaciated that they are mere living skeletons."

And the

### **CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE**

on the "Conduct of the War," of which Hon. Benj. F. Wade was chairman, went to Annapolis and examined for themselves the condition of the men who had just returned from rebel captivity, and the report of that committee to Congress says :

"The men present the appearance of living skeletons, many of them being nothing but skin and bones, some are even maimed for life, having been frozen while exposed to the inclemency of the winter season on Belle Isle, being compelled to lie on the bare ground without tent or blankets, some without even coats, notwithstanding the winds and storms to which they were exposed, and the men declare that they frequently kept from freezing to



PROVIDENCE SPRING AS IT IS TO-DAY



## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

death by walking rapidly back and forth during the hours that should have been devoted to sleep. Your Committee finds it impossible to describe the deplorable condition of those returned prisoners of War."

Still another Committee, of which Mr. Holmes was Chairman reported to Congress as follows :

"The prisoners on Belle Isle lived like the savages of Africa, being compelled to burrow in the sand for places of shelter, while starving on unwholesome and insufficient food. Such was the condition of the brave and heroic men who sacrificed their all at the call of their Country."

Ambrose Spencer, a gentleman who lived close to Andersonville, testified in the Wertz trial, that he

"Visited the Stockade frequently, and the condition of the prisoners was as wretched as could be imagined. Not only were they exposed to the inclemency of the weather, but after days of rain I have seen the mud twelve inches deep, and the prisoners compelled to lie in it."

Rev. Hamilton, the Roman Catholic Priest who frequently visited the prison in his official capacity, testified at the same trial, that in most cases the sick to whom he ministered,

"Had nothing to lie upon but the ground, and no shelter. Early in the morning I have counted as many as sixty dead bodies of those who had died during the night."

And the official records on file at Washington show that of every hundred prisoners taken by the enemy

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

forty died, while the death rate of rebels who fell into our hands was but six to the hundred.

“Cast within the dread enclosure,  
Victims of an earthly hell,  
Racked by hunger and exposure,  
Daily hundreds of them fell.”

Colored prisoners, of whom there were quite a number, received no attention whatever at the hands of either the keeper or physicians, and it mattered not how badly they had been wounded or how sick they became, they were not even taken to the hospital, while those who were at all able were compelled to dig trenches and perform other manual labor about the place.

In the latter part of August the writer, having become a physical wreck, was removed to the

### HOSPITAL

Which was such in name only, being merely a five-acre piece of woodland, in which a few dilapidated tents had been erected, but not half enough to shelter the sick and wounded who were brought there, and the sights and scenes daily witnessed were beyond belief.

Groaning, moaning, delirious men under every tent and tree, and an almost entire absence of medicines, rendering death the only hope of relief.



## THE BOYS IN BLUE

A shed known as the "dead house" within sight of the so-called hospital, constructed of limbs of trees, received the emaciated forms as soon as the breath took its departure, a four-mule team being kept busy hauling the bodies of those once stalwart "Boys in Blue," a dozen at a time, loaded cord-wood fashion, to the shallow trenches, where coffinless and in most cases



THE CHAIN GANG

minus every particle of clothing, they were placed side by side and the earth filled in upon them.

On the return trip the same "dead wagon," brought our food from the cook house to the Stockade and hospital.

A cleverly contrived attempt to escape by way of the dead house was made by a prisoner, who con-

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

ceived the idea of feigning death in order to accomplish his purpose, and four of his comrades who were in the secret and intended trying the same plan in case the experiment proved successful, placing the apparently lifeless body on a stretcher, as was the custom, carried the pretender to the dead house, where they laid the to all intents and purposes deceased, among a number that were not only dead in the true sense, but should long ago have been buried, and here he remained motionless but with hearing ears and seeing eyes, until the shades of night hovered over the place, when supposing the coast to be clear, he became very much alive and proceeded to make himself scarce around those parts. But the best laid schemes of men often miscarry, and such was the case in this instance, for a lynx-eyed sentinel chancing to see our dead-alive hero emerge from the shed and make tracks for the woods gave the alarm, and he was recaptured before getting any considerable distance, and ordered to the chain gang, which was composed of a score or more of poor fellows, who, having gained the ill will of the keeper, were not only hand-cuffed together, but had a ball and chain riveted to their ankles, and one of the number having died while thus hobbled, the services of a blacksmith with cold chisel and hammer was required in order to remove his shackles and separate the dead from the living.

## THE BOYS IN BLUE

Another cruel instrument of torture in constant use was the "Stocks."

There was a small band of Christian inmates in the Stockade, who daily at sunset held religious services in different parts of the enclosure, and their "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow" served as a constant reminder of the great truth, that no matter what man's condition in life may be, he has much to be thankful for.

September 8th, information was received that the worst cases in the hospital were to be exchanged, which was certainly

### GLAD TIDINGS

of great joy.

"The heavy hearts grew light,  
And the dim eyes bright,"

at the prospect of seeing home and friends once more, so that when the day of deliverance came we took our departure for Savannah in fine spirits, which city was reached September 15th, the yard connected with the county jail serving as a place of confinement for several days, while awaiting as we were told, transportation. But alas, our fondest hopes were soon crushed, for instead of proceeding homeward we were again taken by train into the interior of the State, and kept under strong guard in an open field for ten days, and then removed to Florence, South Carolina, and turned

## THE BOYS IN BLUE

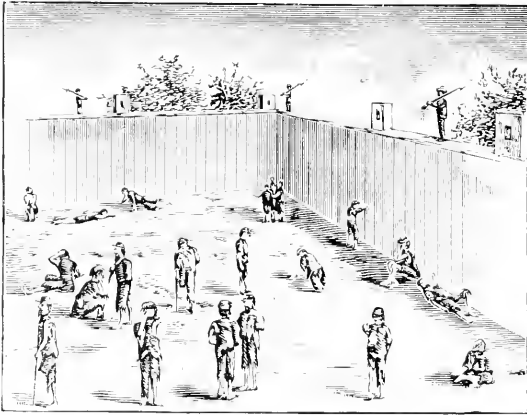
into a pen somewhat similar to that at Andersonville, though much smaller.

The wise man Solomon has said that,

“ Hope deferred  
Maketh the heart sick,”

and there never was a truer utterance, as was proven on this occasion, for despair taking the place of expectation turned our joy to sorrow and hundreds of deaths were the result.

We could never account for this backward move, but suppose there must have been a misunderstanding



FLORENCE PRISON PEN

between the Confederate authorities and our Government.

The beginning of November we were again taken to Savannah, and now found the small Confederate steamer “Swan” in readiness to convey us to Unele

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

Sam's majestic transport that awaited us on the bosom of the broad Atlantic Ocean, which as our eyes beheld we were about to salute with "three cheers and a tiger," but we were deterred from thus giving vent to our feelings by the officer in charge of the "Swan" who declared most emphatically that he would throw overboard the first "Yankee" who opened his mouth. So we held our peace until the last man had been safely transferred to our boat, when cheer after cheer was given for the old flag.

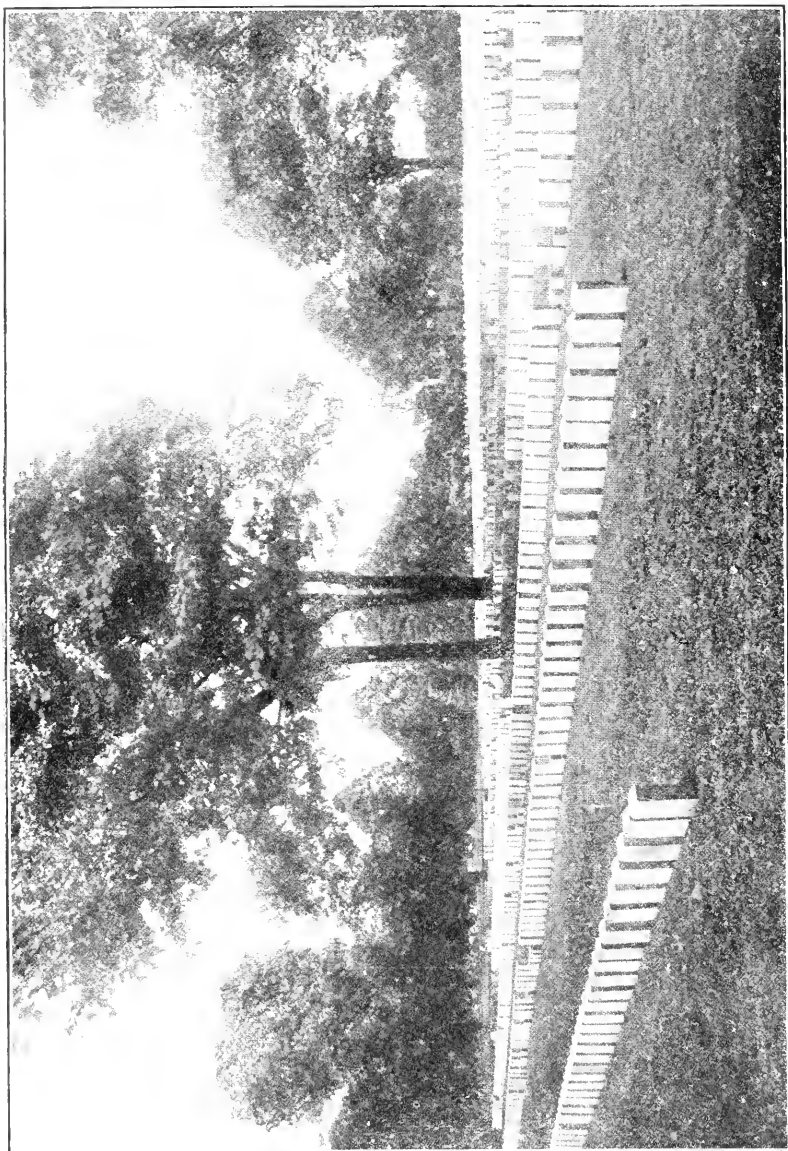
On board the transport every possible provision had been made for our comfort and welfare, each man after being newly clothed from head to foot, was served with beef tea, biscuits and cold meat, a score or more of young ladies acting in the capacity of waitresses, and last but by no means least, our weary bodies were permitted to repose on soft white cots, so that after almost ten long months of a living death, our lot had at last been cast in what seemed a very "Heaven below."

Next morning the vessel weighed anchor and passing Cape Hatteras, the Rip Raps and Fortress Monroe arrived at Annapolis, Md., the 19th day of November, where a band of music and a great gathering of people awaited our coming, many being fathers, mothers, wives, sisters and friends from all parts of the country, expecting to meet loved ones, but not a few were doomed to disappointment, for instead of greeting

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

those who were near and dear to them, they received the sorrowful news that their bodies lie beneath the southern sands. Consequently many heart-rending scenes were witnessed, the saddest being that of a mother who on being told that her boy had long since died, became hopelessly insane, and for weeks thereafter she was reported as making daily visits to the landing, where for hours she stood and looked out over the water for him who would never return.





ANDERSONVILLE CEMETERY AS IT NOW APPEARS



## ANDERSONVILLE TO-DAY



IS a flag station on the Georgia Central Railway.

The burial ground of twenty-five acres, a mile distant from the prison pen, was secured by the United States Government soon after the close of the war, and has been nicely laid out, a suitably inscribed head-stone marking each grave, while from a flag staff the standard of our re-united country constantly waves over the last resting-place of the fourteen thousand brave men and true, who there perished rather than that Secession should triumph. A resident superintendent in the employ of the Government is constantly in attendance to look after the grounds and receive visitors.

Fifteen years ago the prison site proper was bought by the Department of Georgia, Grand Army of the Republic, to be forever preserved as a sacred object lesson in patriotism of the days that tried men's souls, and nine years ago the property was turned over to the "Woman's Relief Corps," and that auxiliary to the Grand Army has since purchased the adjoining land, on which was located the fortifications and hospital, the entire possession containing eighty-eight acres.

## THE BOYS IN BLUE

The old stockade having been destroyed by relic seekers and the hand of time, a substantial wire fence and iron gates now enclose the grounds, thousands of dollars having been expended in preserving and beautifying the place, while a fund is now being established for the perpetual care of the property.

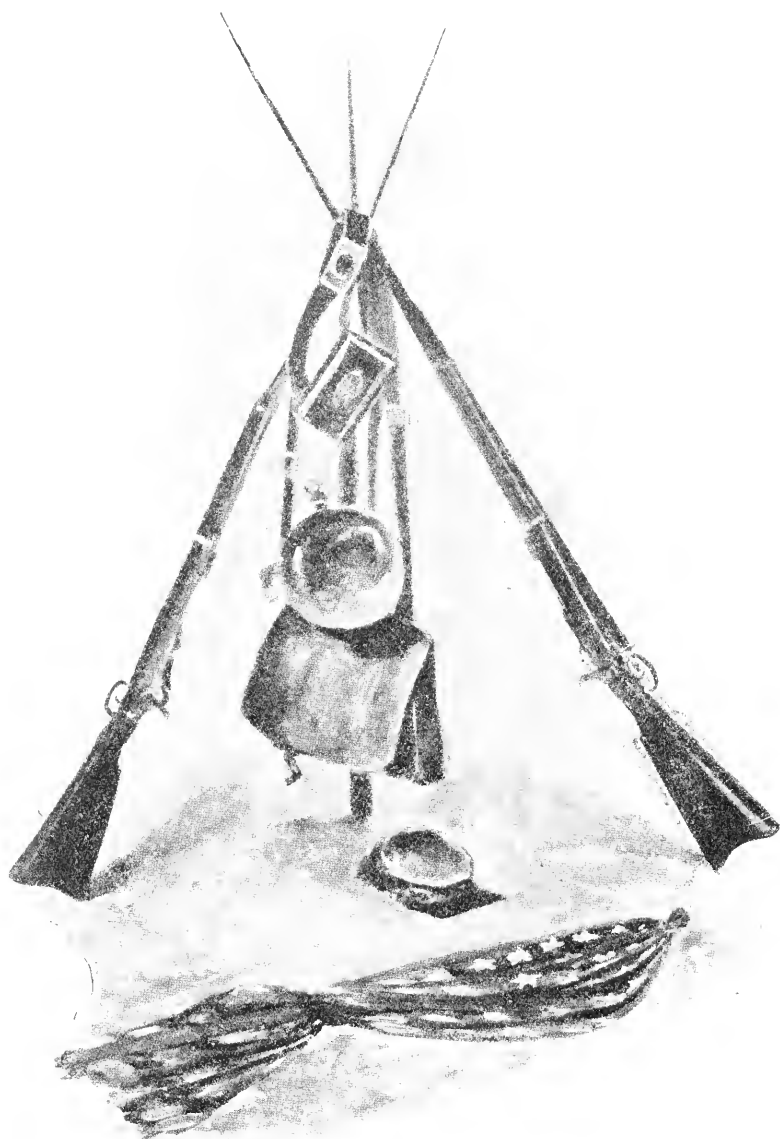
Miss Clara Barton, of "Red Cross" fame, who was familiar with the conditions at Andersonville, in a recent letter to the publisher of "Boys in Blue," says:

"Men never suffered more and lived; men never died more nobly. I believe that if the trumpet of the great archangel could sound, calling the patriot-dead of the world to rise, that fourteen thousand men would stand on their feet within the cemetery lines of Andersonville, as worthily, justly and honored as the ancient heroes of Greece and Rome."

Let us hope that suffering and death such as was the lot of the Union soldiers and sailors at Belle Isle and Andersonville, may never again be known to us or to any people.

On the 9th day of April, 1865, Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Gen. U. S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston handed his sword to Gen. W. T. Sherman at Savannah, Georgia, on the 26th day of the same month, and Gen. Kirby Smith laid down his arms in Texas one month later, when





PEACE

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

### PEACE


was declared and the mighty conflict, during which rivers of blood were shed and billions of dollars expended was at an end, and the oft expressed desire of the great chieftain Grant "Let us have peace" was realized.

The four years of unprecedented struggle having witnessed the success of good government, the securing of freedom to 4,000,000 human beings who had been held in bondage and the preservation of the Union, all sections of our beloved country have become more firmly than ever welded together, and the American Eagle has made itself heard and respected the world over as never before.

May the watchword of North, South, East and West ever more be "Long Live the Republic."

With the cessation of hostilities the army and navy were rapidly disbanded, and more than a million survivors were mustered out of the United States service, many of whom bore the scars of battle or other evidences of the hardships and dangers through which they had passed.

## GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC

T was then that the Grand Army of the Republic sprang into existence, and soon became one of the greatest fraternal and charitable organizations the world ever knew, the first Post having been organized by Dr. B. F. Stephenson, at Decatur, Ill., April 6th, 1866, with Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty as its principles, the objects of the order being

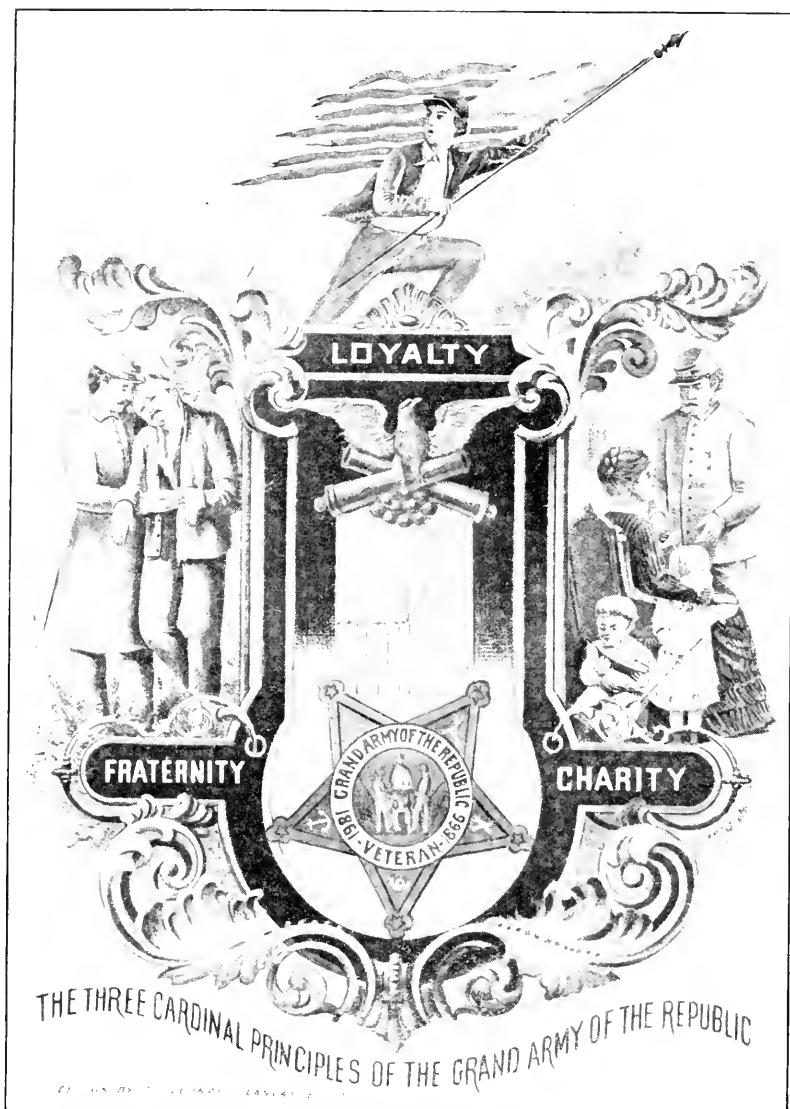
“To preserve and strengthen those kind and fraternal feelings which bind together soldiers, sailors and marines who united to suppress the late rebellion, and to perpetuate the memory of the dead.

“To assist such former comrades in arms as need help and protection, and to extend needful aid to the widows and orphans of those who have fallen.

“To maintain true allegiance to the United States of America, based upon a paramount respect for fidelity to its Constitution and Laws ; to discomtenance whatever tends to weaken loyalty, incites insurrection, treason and rebellion or in any manner impairs the efficiency and permanency of our free institutions ; and to encourage the spread of universal liberty, equal rights and justice to all men.”

How well these noble aims have been lived up to is a part of the history of the country, for through the





THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC



## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

instrumentality of the Grand Army of the Republic, just pension and other important legislation, in the interest of former comrades and their widows and orphans, has been enacted. State and national homes for the aged and needy were established, to the end that no man who wore the Union blue need spend his days in an almshouse. Schools for the mental, moral and physical education of the veterans' children are provided, and measures have been adopted whereby every honorably discharged soldier and sailor is assured a respectable Christian burial, his grave being properly marked and forever kept green.

In addition to all this the hundreds of thousands of dollars dispensed in charity by the Grand Army of the Republic is something the world knows nothing about, and the good work of this brotherhood will go on until the last comrade has been mustered into the Grand Army above.

In this organization there is perfect equality, no distinction being made on account of nationality, creed, color or politics, nor is there preference by reason of former rank in the service or present station in life, all that is asked of an applicant for membership is "Did he respond to his country's call in the days of its life and death struggle, and faithfully fulfill his obligation to the Government." If the answer be "yes," the right hand of fellowship is extended.

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

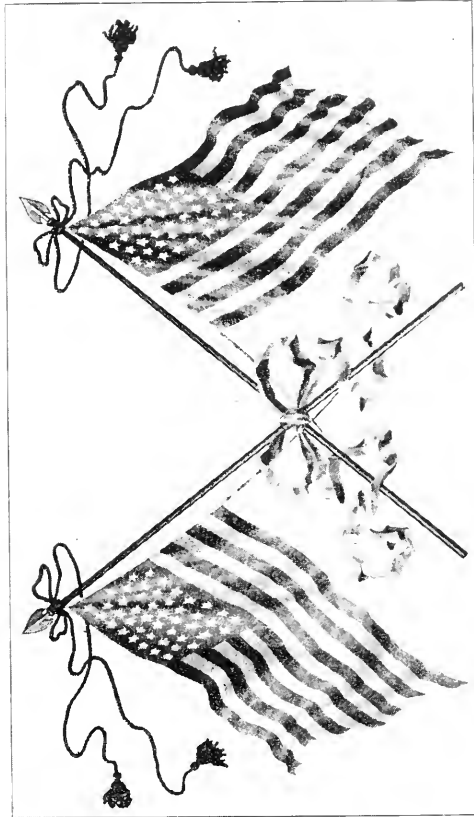
It is certainly a proud privilege to be numbered among the men who are permitted to wear the "captured cannon metal bronze badge," that tells to the world that the wearer is one of the loyal brave and true, who not only offered his life that our country might be kept undivided, and the

### STARS AND STRIPES

remain unsullied, but in times of peace stood sentinel over the welfare of the comrade who with him shared the perils of the conflict, and followed the flag to victory, the same flag that tradition tells us General George Washington drew a rough sketch of, immediately after the Continental Congress on the 14th day of June, 1777, passed its memorable resolution that "The flag of the United States be thirteen Stripes, alternate red and white, that the Union be thirteen White Stars in a blue field, representing a new constellation." And which we are further informed he who was "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," took to Miss Betsy Ross in order that she might make the first "Star Spangled Banner," but that lady suggesting that the stars would be more regular in appearance, as well as less difficult of construction, if made with five points instead of six as in the drawing, folded a scrap of paper in such a

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

manner that a single cut with the scissors produced a five pointed star of beautiful proportions, which was at once adopted by the Committee, and for sixty years thereafter Miss Ross made all the flags used by the



Government, the original design being maintained until two newly admitted States, Kentucky and Vermont, claimed representation on the Nation's Banner.

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

which Congress, in 1794, altered so as to consist of fifteen red and white stripes, with a corresponding number of stars, arranged in three rows of five each, and under this ensign was fought the War of 1812.

The additional creation of new commonwealths, however, saw again destroyed the numerical correspondence between the elements of the flag and the members of the Union. So that by the year 1818 the five additional States of Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana and Mississippi, having been admitted into the Union, a further change in the flag became necessary, and Congress decided on April 4th of that year that after the Fourth of July next following, the same should consist of "thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, with a union of twenty white stars on a field of blue, and that upon the admission of each new State into the Union an additional star be added to the flag."

Thus by a wise provision of legislation the original form of our national standard, emblematic of the thirteen States of the Revolution was perpetuated, and the addition of a star as each State was admitted to the Union gave proper recognition to all and makes "Old Glory" a significant emblem of the growth and power of the country.

An interesting fact perhaps not generally known, connected with the history of the flag is that up to

## *THE BOYS IN BLUE*

the close of the War of the Rebellion not a thread of bunting was made in the United States, all such material having been imported from Europe, but on the 21st day of February, 1866, Gen. B. F. Butler presented to Congress a genuine American bunting Stars and Stripes, being the first ever made, and it was unfurled over the Capitol.

Since then all flags required by the government are made in this country, consequently American in every sense of the word.

**“E PLURIBUS UNUM.”**

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